

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1 - 7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~increasing fruit number or fruit weight~~initiating early fruiting in a ~~nonleguminous~~ plant comprising the steps of:

applying to the plant a first dose of a lipochitooligosaccharide (LCO) more than 45 days after seeding at a concentration of from about 1 ng to about 1000 ng per plant; and

applying to the plant a second dose of an LCO at a concentration of from about 1 ng to about 1000 ng per plant,

under conditions effective for the plant to produce at least an equivalent amount of fruit at least one week earlier than a control plant that has been administered only one dose of an LCO.

9. - 16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the ~~nonleguminous~~ plant is of the family *Solanaceae*, *Fabaceae*, or *Poaceae*.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the LCO is applied at a concentration of from about 10 ng per plant to about 100 ng per plant.

19. **(Canceled)**

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~18~~, wherein the LCO is applied at a concentration of ~~from about 50 ng per plant to about 75 ng per plant.~~

21. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~increasing biomass or yield~~initiating early fruiting in a ~~leguminous~~ tomato plant comprising the steps of:

applying to the tomato plant a first dose of a lipo-chitooligosaccharide (LCO) more than 45 days after seeding at a concentration of from about 1 ng to about 1000 ng per tomato plant; and

applying to the tomato plant a second dose of an LCO at a concentration of from about 1 ng to about 1000 ng per tomato plant,

under conditions effective for the tomato plant to produce at least an equivalent amount of fruit at least one week earlier than a control tomato plant that has been administered only one dose of an LCO.

22. **(Canceled)**

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the LCO is applied at a concentration of from about 10 ng per plant to about 100 ng per plant.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the LCO is applied at a concentration of about 50 ng per tomato plant~~leguminous plant is a soybean plant.~~

25-33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the second dose is applied ~~between about two weeks to about six weeks after the first dose~~at least 14 days after the first dose.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the second dose is applied at ~~least three weeks~~14 days after the first dose.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the LCO is applied to the foliage of the plant.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the LCO is applied to the foliage of the plant.

38-39. (Canceled)

40. **(Canceled)**